United Nations A/70/191

General Assembly

Distr.: General
29 July 2015
English
Original: Russian

Seventieth session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventieth session

Observer status for the International Civil Defence Organization in the General Assembly

Letter dated 29 July 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the seventieth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the International Civil Defence Organization in the General Assembly".

In conformity with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory note (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached to this letter.

We should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations

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Annex I

Explanatory note

The International Civil Defence Organization is an international organization based in Switzerland.

It is at present the only intergovernmental organization that specializes in civil defence and protection of civilians at the international level. It operates on the basis of its Constitution, an international agreement adopted on 17 October 1966.

Under the Constitution, the Organization's core functions are:

- To promote the development of governmental bodies and mechanisms for the protection of people, property and the environment in the event of natural and man-made disasters.
- To bring together national civil defence services, including search and rescue units, and to develop cooperation, exchanges and coordination among them. The International Civil Defence Organization provides them with technical and advisory support and develops and implements relevant training programmes.

1. Members

Under article 3 of the Constitution, "Membership in the Organization shall be open to all States". Any country that accepts the Constitution may join the Organization. States can also obtain observer status, which entitles them to take part in all activities of the Organization.

The Organization currently has 54 member States. There are 19 countries with observer status. The Organization also has 30 associate members, including some international organizations. The member States, observers and associate members represent all regions of the world.

2. Structure, management and financing

The highest body of the Organization is its General Assembly, which is composed of delegates from member States.

The Executive Council of the Organization is responsible for implementing the decisions of the General Assembly and guiding the work of the Organization.

The Organization has a permanent secretariat that provides administrative and technical support. The secretariat is headed by a Secretary-General elected for a four-year term.

In accordance with article 42 of the Constitution, the expenditures of the Organization are apportioned among the members in accordance with a scale fixed by the Assembly.

3. Aims and activities

The main priorities and spheres of activity of the Organization are reflected in the strategic development programme. An important provision of that programme is improved engagement with the United Nations and other international organizations

on the basis of new forms of cooperation in the area of improving preparedness for the protection of people and the environment.

The Organization has ongoing communication with international partners, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Consultative Group on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets, the Civil-Military Coordination Section, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team, the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the secretariat of the Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, as well as other associate members, in particular the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior.

4. Observer status in the General Assembly of the United Nations

The General Assembly of the United Nations, by its decision 49/426, decided that the granting of observer status should be confined to States and to those intergovernmental organizations whose activities cover matters of interest to the Assembly.

The International Civil Defence Organization is an intergovernmental organization, having been established as such on the basis of its Constitution, a multilateral agreement adopted on 17 October 1966. The Organization is financed by its member States, which are States Members of the United Nations.

The aims of the General Assembly of the United Nations and those of the International Civil Defence Organization with regard to the formulation and implementation of effective measures to protect and ensure human security in the face of today's shifting challenges and threats are complementary. In addition, the promotion, through the United Nations system, of the activities of the International Civil Defence Organization could contribute to the wider dissemination of the latter's expertise and work. Collaboration between the International Civil Defence Organization and relevant United Nations entities on a regular and systematic basis will foster a new image of civil defence.

Granting observer status in the General Assembly to the International Civil Defence Organization would further strengthen mutually beneficial institutional dialogue between that Organization and the United Nations and would expand the capacity of both institutions to promote peace and security and develop effective cooperation in the field of humanitarian response.

Annex II

Draft resolution
Observer status for the International Civil Defence Organization in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the International Civil Defence Organization,

1. *Decides* to invite the International Civil Defence Organization to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary actions to implement the present resolution.